

HAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES
April 17, 2007

Budget Committee Members Present

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman
Michael Plouffe, Vice-Chairman
William Lally, Selectman Representative
Jim Desrosiers, School Board Representative
Victor DeMarco
Maury Friedman
Dick Hansen
Jack Lessard
Richard Nichols
Michael Pierce
Norman Silberdick

Excused

Russ Bernstein

Unexcused

Pat Collins
Eileen Latimer

Chairman Woolsey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Chairman Woolsey introduced the members of the Committee and welcomed Jim Desrosiers, the new School Board Representative.

Approval of Minutes – March 20, 2007

Moved by Mr. Lessard, seconded by Mr. Pierce, to approve the Minutes of March 20, 2007.

Vote: 8 yes, 0 no, 3 abstentions (Desrosiers, DeMarco, Lally). Motion passed.

Chairman Woolsey said last week there was a discussion at the Selectmen's meeting regarding two new hires, the Conservation Officer and the Data Collector. Chairman Woolsey said she would like to emphasize that the Budget Committee's recommendation to hire the Conversation Officer was contingent on fees. These fees can be set by the Planning Board. Mr. Lally said this is being investigated. Chairman Woolsey said the Data Collector position was not recommended by the Budget Committee. The Committee recommended instead that a capital reserve fund be set up for revaluation of all properties at once. Mr. Lally said some positions are critical to the Town and the Data Collector position falls into that category.

Chairman Woolsey said that this is a problematic time to be hiring people. If you look at the Town Report, overtime is very high—approximately \$566,000 for the Fire Department. She asked why the four firefighter positions could not be filled for this amount. Mr. Lally said that he couldn't comment on that question.

Chairman Woolsey said she was concerned about the ISO ratings for the Town. If these ratings are not maintained, every single resident of the Town will be hit when they receive their homeowners insurance bills.

Chairman Woolsey said management is not the problem. There is a need for enough bodies in the Fire Department to handle emergencies.

Mr. DeMarco said that a lot of that \$500,000+ overtime number has to do with training. Also, if employees are out on Workmen's Comp, this is also covered by overtime.

Mr. Silberdick said the way to reduce overtime is to have the proper staffing. Mr. DeMarco said the Fire Department is presently four people short and there are two out on Workmen's Comp.

Chairman Woolsey said it is a concern that the Fire Department is understaffed. This is a safety issue and needs to be addressed.

Mr. Friedman said some kind of forum is needed where these issues can be discussed. He said he was concerned that Hampton does things differently and the costs are higher than in other towns.

Mr. Nichols said he had reviewed the employee contracts and felt the Town went through a period beginning in 2000 where the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen were excessively employee sensitive rather than taxpayer sensitive. The Town has a responsibility to speak up to the Legislature about retirement and benefits.

Chairman Woolsey said it is important to encourage the Selectmen to contact legislators. The Selectmen should be more proactive.

Mr. DeMarco said that retirement has nothing to do with contracts, it is controlled by the State.

Chairman Woolsey reviewed Mr. Schwotzer's Report to the Board of Selectmen. She said Mr. Schwotzer has a tight hold on purchasing, but she was concerned about encumbrances. She said Mr. Schwotzer is working on this issue.

Regarding the Conservation Officer position, Chairman Woolsey said she did not like to see the pulling of someone's salary out of the unemployment account.

Chairman Woolsey said she would like to invite Mr. Schwotzer to give the Committee a financial update at the June meeting. The Committee agreed.

Mr. Silberdick said in the business world, you can look at accounting data and everything is generic. However, in Hampton the Fire Department and Police Department each have their own metrics. We need something to measure them by and an understanding of what they view as relevant information.

Mr. Friedman said the need is for these departments to disclose what they need and if they are different from other towns why they are different. Chairman Woolsey said the question is "What

Hampton Budget Committee
April 17, 2007
Page 3

is available to fund the needs of these departments?" The Selectmen should be setting up parameters and then presenting them to the Committee.

Chairman Woolsey said it is important to never mention anything about percentages, particularly when collective bargaining agreements are in process.

Mr. Friedman said the Committee needs to see where the departments are going and why and this should be backed up by numbers. He would like to see the types of calls by month and compare to past years. He would also like to see five year plans on people, facilities and equipment. Mr. Friedman suggested this be requested in the letter to the Town Manager prior to next month's meeting.

Chairman Woolsey said she would include Mr. Friedman's concerns in the invitation to the Town Manager and Selectmen to attend the meeting in May.

Mr. Pierce said that previous presentations by the department heads were about how well the departments were performing, but did not answer questions about what they are doing, what can be done to make things better and what problems need to be addressed.

Chairman Woolsey said that the Committee will not only be asking for information for themselves, but also as an educational conduit to the public.

Mr. Silberdick said it should be suggested to the Town Manager that he work with department heads to present this Committee with relevant information, i.e., what are the metrics, history, etc. Has the department been efficient and what are the goals going forward?

Mr. DeMarco said he would suggest that the Committee suggest to the Town Manager that he give us a presentation on what he is looking to achieve.

School Board Report

Chairman Woolsey again welcomed Mr. Desrosiers. Mr. Desrosiers said there is a lot to be accomplished this year. The list of nominations by rehire was discussed and approved. The Board is currently in the process of reviewing test scores. Students are progressing well. The Kindergarten Open House was postponed due to weather and is rescheduled for this Thursday.

Chairman Woolsey went over items to be included in the invitation to the Town Manager and Selectmen for the May meeting.

Items to be included are:

1. Mr. Friedman's concerns.
2. Four years of default budgets and process going forward.
3. Metrics and measurements.

4. Ask Town Manager to tell Committee about what he plans going forward and his goals and plans as Manager.

Hampton Budget Committee
April 17, 2007
Page 4

Chairman Woolsey said the intent at this time is to invite the three major department heads to come to the meeting in October to present an overview as to their projections for the future.

Mr. Silberdick suggested the possibility of using the Mason's Hall for a senior center. Mr. Friedman said a minus to that suggestion is that this location is not adjacent to other facilities such as the library, Town Hall, etc.

Chairman Woolsey said the next meeting will be Tuesday, May 15, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Lessard **moved**, seconded by Mr. Hansen, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Rice
Secretary

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman